

Tom Horne
Superintendent

N·E·W·S

ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Contact: Doug Nick, Interim Press Secretary
602-364-1945

ARIZONA SCHOOLS IN 100% COMPLIANCE WITH HORNE BI-LINGUAL STANDARDS

DISTRICTS HEED STATE LAW

PHOENIX (Tuesday, August 19, 2003) – Fewer than six months after announcing an aggressive new effort to ensure that all Arizona school districts comply with voter-approved state law, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Horne today announced that all of Arizona's school districts are reporting that they are voluntarily abiding by the stringent restrictions on bi-lingual education.

“For the first time ever, none of Arizona's public school children will be denied their precious right to become educated in English,” Horne said. “The misguided, if well-intentioned, efforts of some school districts to actually discourage children from learning English by granting dubious waivers so they could enter bi-lingual programs have been eliminated. All Arizona public school children now have the chance to soar academically.”

In February, Superintendent Horne announced new Arizona Department of Education guidelines for implementing English immersion programs as mandated under A.R.S. § 15-756.B. That statute required the Department to develop guidelines for the monitoring of school districts and charter schools for the purpose of insuring compliance with all federal and state laws regarding English language learners. In addition, the Department is cross-training 45 monitors whose job it will be to determine that all Arizona public schools remain in compliance.

A challenge to the implementation strategy was defeated when Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard issued an opinion in July stating that Superintendent Horne was within his powers to set passing scores for waivers, so long as there was evidence regarding average scores, which Superintendent Horne says has been documented.

This is set forth in detail in a memo Superintendent Horne issued to school districts due to some instances of miscommunication over implementation of the law. A copy of the memo is attached.

Following issuance of the memo, Department employees contacted the 20 districts with the largest number of English learners, and all 20 responded that they would comply Horne's

guidelines. (For example, they would require a score of four or higher on the LAS test, or its equivalent, for a type I waiver.)

“Over the past few months, the Department has worked vigorously to help districts and charter schools bring students to English proficiency as quickly as possible,” Horne added. “We also held the Super Seminar last spring, which was an opportunity for districts and charters to see the best methods for implementing the English immersion law. This is a direct result of my desire for the Department of Education to be a service-oriented agency in addition to fulfilling the role of ensuring compliance with state and federal laws. I’m tremendously pleased with the level of cooperation and the result of 100 percent compliance.”

#####

Read the memo sent out to all Superintendents and Principals by clicking [here](#).